

PROCEEDING

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Raising Preschool Teachers' Awareness of Their Pronunciation Professional Development Effort

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Abstract

Unlike five to seven years ago, English nowadays has become an important competence which must be taught by teachers in the children's early ages. This demand has emerged as one of the impacts of the development of the present education and needs in the era of globalization. Due to the fact that English is given in the early ages, it means that teachers play a very important role to make a strong foundation on their students' English proficiency. As children have the ability to adapt and adopt English words much easier than adults, therefore, teachers of English also have greater responsibilities to teach correct pronunciation of English words. However, based on my observation, there were still many private preschool teachers who might not realize that their incorrect pronunciation had been imitated by their students. So, in this paper, I would like to describe further about to what extent these private preschool teachers are aware of their roles in making the students' pronunciation better in which it may result in more competitive outputs in the language areas, what features of pronunciation they have been struggling with and what efforts they have done to cope with their own English pronunciation as a part of professional development. In order to get those profiles, I selected 10 private preschools in Surabaya, Sidoarjo and Malang and then distributed questionnaires to 50 private preschool teachers. To get what pronunciation features they find difficult, a set of words which they mostly teach and represent sounds of English were given to them to be pronounced and later their voices were taped. Afterwards, their voices were transcribed as my data.

Keywords: competence, English proficiency, English pronunciation, preschools

I. Background of the Study

Foreign language acquisition in children has become a paramount matter for the past few years in the early age education. In Indonesia, English becomes the first priority of foreign language that is taught to children. This fact is not surprising at all due to the current needs of today's world for future investment such as entering an international schools or universities and being competitive in job markets-which is getting harder and harder from time to time if someone does not have an added value within himself/herself. Being able to communicate in English then has been the concern of many educators especially young learner teachers. As a consequence, there are a lot of numbers of preschools including English in their curriculum even in the very early of children's age; started from 6 months old. The levels in which English introduced are from Baby, Playgroup and Kindergarten level; teaching them from simple English vocabularies to simple English expressions/sentences. The reason English is given in the early age since most experts state that children have a flexible brain from the age of 2 to 10 years